



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, February 11, 2013
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Woodbury, Clerk Stevens, Members Berthiaume & Fritze, and Town Administrator Gaudette

At 6:05 p.m. Chairman Pepe called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the Workshop Meeting of January 23rd and Business Meeting of January 28th, 2013 (Woodbury / Berthiaume) passed 5/0.

Citizen Input

Kurt Nordquist, Gale Drive, commended the Highway Department for an excellent job keeping up with over 30 inches of snow over the weekend.

Communications

Mr. Berthiaume noted he received an excellent suggestion from Al Atchue, to recognize long time Town employees for their service. Mr. Gaudette will create a list of employees with over 20 years of service.

Old Business

Update: Vicious Dog Bylaw Compliance – Robert Norris & Jaime Martel, 6 Cranberry Lane, Apartment A

Ms. Martel reported that she is working with Buckley Insurance in Worcester to obtain a liability insurance policy. She expects paperwork to be complete by the end of the week. Mr. Gaudette will contact Buckley Insurance directly to ensure the correct policy is issued.

Mr. Woodbury said that if the policy is not in place by the February 20th Workshop, steps will be taken for Animal Control Officer to seize the dogs. Ms. Martel said she is not using the pen; the dogs are mainly in the house or she takes them out on a leash only.

Action Item: Adopt Community Comparison Chart

A motion to continue to use the current Community Comparison Chart as a comparison tool and to use the seven additional Towns listed as alternates (Berthiaume / Stevens) passed 5-0.

Action Item: Vote to authorize additional emergency Snow & Ice expenditures in accordance with MGL c. 44, §31D

Mr. Gaudette reported that the first request for \$50,000 for additional snow and ice came in a month ago. This second request for an additional \$60,000 came in before this last major storm making it necessary to increase the request to \$100,000.

Mr. Eben Butler noted that contractors were hired in 2011 to remove snow from narrow streets and bring to O'Gara Park. He wants to make arrangements to do this again this year, especially since two of the Town dump trucks are currently out for repair. Mr. Butler thanked Mr. Fritze for his assistance during the storm.

A motion to authorize \$100,000 in additional emergency Snow and Ice in accordance with MGL c. 44, §31D (Woodbury/Fritze) passed 5-0.

New Business

Discussion Item: Legislative Delegation: Senator Stephen Brewer, Representative Anne Gobi, and Representative Peter Durant

Mr. Gaudette and the Board welcomed Senator Brewer, Representative Gobi and Representative Durant and thanked them for coming in to provide an annual update on the FY14 State budget.

Senator Brewer provided a handout and discussed current budget challenges. He expects Local Aid for Spencer to remain about the same as last year, though there will likely be cuts in Chapter 90. Funding for improvements to the Mass Transit/MBTA Commuter Rail is necessary. It had to shut down twice last week. Massachusetts has an AA bond rating, one of the highest in the nation.

Representative Gobi provided handouts and discussed the following items:

- Chapter 74 Vocational School Legislation - She attended a presentation Mr. Gaudette gave on this recently and commended him for his work in this area
- Housing Reform - Housing Authority should remain under local control
- Casinos - some slot machines may open in September
- Health Care reform - 99% of Massachusetts residents are insured
- Gun Legislation - proposed by the Governor more mental health and background checks are needed. Massachusetts has the strictest gun laws in the nation

Representative Durant provided a handout of an Analysis of the Governor's House 1 Budget. He was pleased to see that the Governor proposed alternatives for Local Aid utilizing an incentive based program. Aid would be awarded based on guidelines that determine how well a community is managed and its performance in key areas.

Mr. Stevens asked what is being done to reduce fraud and abuse at the State level using the example of Medicaid. Mr. Brewer said when they see issues they go after them full speed. Mr. Woodbury mentioned that Chapter 90 is critical for Spencer. Mr. Fritze and Mr. Pepe reiterated that road upgrades are high on the list for Spencer. Mr. Berthiaume noted

that the \$400,000 application fee received from casino companies will be beneficial to the local communities.

Mr. Pepe and the Board thanked the Senator and Representatives for their time.

Action Item: Borrowing for Sewer Department

The Board agreed to reschedule to February 25th.

Discussion Item: Agreement with SEBRSD

Mr. Pepe would like a member of the Board of Selectmen from Spencer and E. Brookfield to have representation as voting members of the School Committee. Mr. Berthiaume suggested inviting the E. Brookfield Selectmen to a future meeting to discuss and decide whether or not to start a formal petition. Mr. Gaudette will send an invitation.

Town Administrator's Report

SEBRSD Financial Deficit Update

Mr. Berthiaume noted it has been two weeks since the Board requested additional budget detail from the School Committee and no information has been provided to date.

A motion to send a letter to the School Committee requesting copies of SEBRSD biweekly payroll reports, employee contracts, including information on Acting Superintendent's salary, revolving fund details, and health insurance percentages (Berthiaume / Stevens) passed 5-0.

Spencer Rescue Squad Update

Mr. Gaudette advised the Board that he has been working with Mr. Berthiaume and the Director of the Rescue Squad on a solution for ambulance service. They discussed a \$130,000 contract for FY14. Either way, the Town must determine how to fund ambulance service. Mr. Gaudette is also looking at alternatives, including a short term contract with the Spencer Rescue Squad.

Representative Durant tried to file Legislation to change the current method of paying individuals directly for ambulance service; however it did not go through.

At 8:05 pm the Board adjourned for tape change.

The meeting reconvened at 8:15 pm.

FY2014 Initial Budget Presentation

Mr. Gaudette presented the FY14 draft budget. He advised the Board that there is an increase of 3.18% over FY13 and at this time with current revenue and expense estimates there is a \$60,455 deficit. He will continue to refine the numbers and discuss in greater detail at the February 20th workshop.

The Board reviewed the budget calendar.

Bid Update

No active bids at this time.

Action Item: Amend Town Administrator's Performance Goals

Mr. Gaudette advised the Board that priorities have changed since his annual goals were approved in November. Issues surrounding the SEBRSD budget deficit and the Spencer Rescue Squad are consuming most of his time. He would like to revise the goals by moving the "Organizational Structure and Operational Efficiencies" and "Grant Funding Opportunities" to the FY14 goals. He will continue to work on all other goals, including Regionalization.

Mr. Stevens would still like to discuss the organizational structure for Town Hall operational efficiency during budget meetings.

A motion to accept the Town Administrator Goals as amended (Berthiaume / Fritze) passed 5-0.

Board Liaison Reports:

Mr. Stevens will attend an Economic Development Roundtable meeting at the Chambers of Central Mass South.

Citizen Input

None

Board Member and Staff Comments

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant